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OCT 26 2001

United States General Accounting Office
Washington, DC 20548

October 26, 2001

The Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld
The Secretary of Defense

Attention: DOD Office of the Inspector General
DAIG for GAO Affairs

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This is to advise you that we are initiating a review of the Navy's plans to optimize manning on current and planned surface ships. Specifically, we will examine:

- the Navy's road map for optimizing surface combatant manning on current and future surface ships;
- the extent the Navy has considered optimized manning innovations adopted by other navies, the Military Sealift Command and private industry; and
- the potential for reducing life cycle costs.

Our work will be performed at DOD Headquarters, including the Offices of the Secretary of Defense and Navy, the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, and the Naval Sea Systems Command. Field work will also be performed at the Navy's research and development facilities, the Naval Manpower and Material Analysis Center, the Atlantic and Pacific fleets, the surface forces commands, shipbuilding contractors, and other offices and activities as appropriate.

Your cooperation and assistance during this assignment will be greatly appreciated. Our work will begin in November 2001 under assignment code 350132. We have coordinated this assignment with the Department's Office of the Inspector General.

We would like to schedule an initial meeting with appropriate DOD officials within 2 weeks followed by a briefing on current efforts to optimize manning. The points of contact for the assignment are Mr. Roderick Rodgers, team leader, and Ms. Janet St. Laurent, the Assistant Director. They can be reached by telephone on (202) 512-2897 and (202) 512-4402, or via electronic mail at stlaurenti@gao.gov and rodgersr@gao.gov, respectively.

Sincerely yours,



Carol R. Schuster
Director, Defense Capabilities
and Management